

REMARKS

Preliminarily, so that the Examiner does not begin analysis of the present response prior to receiving the transmittal, Applicants specifically call the attention of the Examiner to an Information Disclosure Statement filed January 24, 2002.

Claims 23, 24, 28, 32 and 35 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over U. S. Patent No. 6,116,736 to Stark et al. (Stark) in view of what the Examiner considers to be Official Notice. Claims 25, 29 and 36 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Stark in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,152,565 to Liu et al. (Liu). Claims 37, 41 and 44 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stark in view of U. S. Patent No. 3,915,654 to Urban (Urban).

Claims 1-22 and 46-53 are indicated to be allowed or allowable if rewritten to overcome informalities.

Applicants are desirous of expediting an allowance and, therefore, cancel Claims 23-45 without prejudice or disclaimer. It is to be stressed that the cancellation of Claims 23-45 is without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants expressly reserve the right to prosecute claims similar in scope, broader in scope or narrower in scope to the cancelled claims in applications related to the presented application (e.g., a reissue, a continuation, a continuation-in-part or an application sharing disclosure in common with the present application).

Applicants have amended Claims 1, 7, 10-11, 13-15, 17, 22 and 46 in minor respects to correct informalities and have

addressed the objections relative to Claims 7, 10-11, 13-15, 17 and 22. The amendments to Claims 1, 7, 10-11, 13-15, 17, 22 and 46 do not "narrow" any claims and are not considered "narrowing" claim amendments. In that Claims 1-23 and 46-53 have already indicated to be allowable, passage to allowance of Claims 1-23 and 46-53 is respectfully requested.

Applicants also add claims 54-131. New claims 54-131 are believed to be allowable for the reason that they depend from an allowable base claim and for the additional recitations they contain. New claims 59-83 are believed to be allowable at least for the reason that they recite subject matter previously indicated to be allowable. New claims 84-131 are believed to be allowable for the reason that they recite combinations of elements not shown or suggested in the cited prior art. Because new claims 84-131 all recite elements which should have reasonably been expected to be claimed, the Examiner is precluded from designating a next Office Action "final" should the Examiner happen to rely on new art in rejecting any of new Claims 84-131.

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants believe the claims of the present application to be in condition for allowance and respectfully request reconsideration and passage to allowance of the application.

If the Examiner believes that contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, the Examiner is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the number noted below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any

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additional fees associated with this communication or credit
any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0289.

Respectfully submitted,

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GSB/bs

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